

House Bill 450  
February 17, 2015  
Presented by Jim Kropp  
House Fish, Wildlife and Parks Committee

Mr. Chairman and committee members, I am Jim Kropp, Chief of Law Enforcement for the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP). I am here today on behalf of the Director in opposition to House Bill 450.

As you are probably aware, there are a number of bills in circulation regarding the use of suppressors on firearms in big game hunting. Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks opposes the use of suppressors for hunting mountain lions and wolves as set out in this bill. We do so for a few reasons.

First and foremost, to allow the use of suppressors in hunting any big game serves to only tarnish the sport of hunting. This is purely a perception issue. Right or wrong, the bad baggage that suppressors have can and will be brought into the equation in a fashion we believe will do no good for big game hunting as legitimate, traditional, and legal recreational and subsistence activities.

We question the purpose of using suppressors in hunting mountain lions, inasmuch as the sport is not what one would call a quiet sport of stealth. Barking hounds, accompanied often with snow machines and other motorized conveyances, far outweigh the single unsuppressed report of a firearm taking a treed cat. We therefore do not see the need for this bill.

With regard to wolves, there are numerous issues, controversies and complexities associated with wolves, wolf management, and wolf hunting in Montana. There remain significant challenges to wolf hunters and the wildlife agency, without throwing in yet another explosive dimension to the mix that is totally unnecessary in the hunting and ultimate successful management of wolves. As such, we must oppose HB 450 and urge a Do Not Pass. I will be available for questions.

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